



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[Docket No. FWS–R7–ES–2021–0002; FF07CAMM00–FX–ES111607MRG01]

Marine Mammals; Letters of Authorization to Take Pacific Walrus and Polar Bears in the Beaufort Sea, Alaska, in 2019 and 2020 and Northern Sea Otters in Cook Inlet, Alaska in 2019 and 2020

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of issuance.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has issued Letters of Authorization for the nonlethal take of polar bears and Pacific walruses incidental to oil and gas industry exploration, development, and production activities in the Beaufort Sea and the adjacent northern coast of Alaska as well as northern sea otters in Cook Inlet, Alaska, in 2019 and 2020. This notice announces a list of the Letters of Authorizations that were issued in calendar years 2019 and 2020. The Letters of Authorization stipulate conditions and methods that minimize impacts to polar bears, Pacific walruses, and northern sea otters from these activities.

ADDRESSES: *Document availability:* You may view this notice as well as the Letters of Authorization at <http://www.regulations.gov> under Docket No.

FWS–R7–ES–2021–0002, or these documents may be requested as described under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT.**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Charles Hamilton, Marine Mammal Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS 341, 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99503, by email at R7mmmRegulatory@fws.gov or by telephone at 1–800–362–5148. Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1–800–877–8339, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On August 5, 2016, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service published in the *Federal Register* a final rule (81 FR 52276) establishing regulations that allow us to authorize the nonlethal, incidental, unintentional take of small numbers of polar bears (*Ursus maritimus*) and Pacific walruses (*Odobenus rosmarus divergens*) during year-round oil and gas industry exploration, development, and production activities in the Beaufort Sea and adjacent northern coast of Alaska. The rule established subpart J in part 18 of title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and is effective through August 5, 2021. The rule prescribed a process under which we issue Letters of Authorization (LOA) to applicants conducting activities as described under the provisions of the regulations.

Each LOA stipulates conditions or methods that are specific to the activity and location. Holders of the LOAs must use methods and conduct activities in a manner that minimizes to the greatest extent practicable adverse impacts on Pacific walruses and polar bears and their habitat, and on the availability of these marine mammals for

subsistence purposes. Intentional take and lethal incidental take are prohibited under these regulations.

In accordance with section 101(a)(5)(A) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA; 16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.) and our regulations at 50 CFR part 18, subpart J, in 2019 and 2020 we issued LOAs to each of the companies in the Beaufort Sea and adjacent northern coast of Alaska shown below in table 1.

Table 1—Beaufort Sea Letters of Authorization

Year	Company	Activity	Project	LOA #
2019	Caelus Natural Resources Alaska, LLC	Close-out and amendment	Transferring ownership of Oooguruk to Eni U.S. Operation Company, Inc., and Nuna to ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc.	16–11 [amended]
2019	ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc.	Acquisition	ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc., acquired Nuna from Caelus	16–13 [amended]
2019	ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc.	Exploration and development	Geotechnical surveys and installation at the proposed Willow airstrip; in support of development in the Bear Tooth Unit	18–14 [amended]
2019	Oil Search Alaska	Exploration and support services	Pikka field exploratory drilling, environmental surveys, and transportation activities	19–01 [amended]
2019	Peak Oilfield Service Company, LLC	Support services	Transportation activities on the North Slope	19–02
2019	SAExploration	Exploration	Seismic activities in the Prudhoe Bay Unit	19–03
2019	TGS–NOPEC Geophysical Company	Exploration	3D seismic activities in the Beaufort Sea; north of the Colville River Delta	19–04
2019	BEM Systems, Incorporated	Remediation	Former United States Air Force Bullen Point Short Range Radar Station	19–05
2019	BP Exploration (Alaska), Inc.	Demobilization	Liberty oil rig demobilization and removal	19–06
2019	Chevron Environmental Management Company	Support services	Debris removal at the former Kalubik Creek No. 1 wellsite on the North Slope	19–07
2019	Eni U.S. Operation Company, Inc.	Exploration, development, and production	Nakaitchuq and Oooguruk oilfields	19–08
2019	Peak Oilfield Service Company, LLC	Support services	Transportation activities on the North Slope	19–09
2019	SAExploration	Support services	Summer cleanup and flyovers on the North Slope	19–10

2019	PRA Petrotechnical Resources of Alaska	Production and research	Monitoring the Hydrate 01 well in Kuparuk	19–11a
2019	Brooks Range Petroleum Corporation	Development	Mustang on the North Slope of Alaska	19–11b
2019	Hilcorp Alaska, LLC	Support services	Arctic cod monitoring associated with the Liberty Project	19–12
2019	ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc.	Development	Greater Mooses Tooth Two (MT7; GMT2)	19–14
2019	SAExploration	Exploration and support services	Seismic surveys and cleanup activities on the North Slope	19–15
2019	ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc.	Exploration	Appraisal well drilling at Willow	19–16
2019	SAExploration	Exploration and support services	Winter seismic and cleanup activities associated with Willow, Narwhal, and Kuukpik	19–17
2019	ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc.	Exploration, development, and support services	Geotechnical surveys; installation of equipment and gravel/ice road development; sampling at Willow	19–18
2019	ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc.	Exploration and development	Fiord West Kuparuk Pilot Program	19–19
2020	Hilcorp Alaska, LLC	Acquisition	Hilcorp Alaska, LLC, acquired all of BP Exploration (Alaska), Inc.’s interests and assets	16–14 [amended]
2020	Olgoonik Construction Services	Production	Plug and abandonment, surface remediation with the Simpson Wells Remediation Project	20–01
2020	Alyeska Pipeline Service Company	Production	Operation and maintenance of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System	20–02
2020	Oil Search Alaska	Exploration, development, support services	Geotechnical boring, surveys, cleanup, installation of facilities and pipelines, and gravel farming at the Pikka Development	20–03 [corrected]
2020	ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc.	Development	Greater Mooses Tooth Two (MT7; GMT2)	20–04
2020	Peak Oilfield Service Company, LLC	Support services	Transportation activities on the North Slope	20–05 [corrected]
2020	Jade Energy, LLC	Development and support services	Maritime barging and tundra ice road construction in the Point Thomson Unit	20–06 [corrected]
2020	Olgoonik Construction Services	Remediation	Permanent plugging, abandonment, and surface remediation for the Fish Creek and Inigok Legacy Wells Remediation Project	20–07
2020	ConocoPhillips P&A Program	Development, support services	Construction of an ice road, transportation, and cleanup activities in the National Petroleum Reserve–Alaska	20–09
2020	Emerald House, LLC	Support services	Transportation activities to the Peregrine Lease Block within the National Petroleum Reserve–Alaska	20–10
2020	ConocoPhillips Willow	Development	Construction for Willow	20–11

2020	Northern Energy Services	Acquisition, close out, and support services	Northern Energy Services acquired Peak Oilfield Service Company, LLC; transportation activities on the North Slope	20–14
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On August 1, 2019, the Service published in the *Federal Register* a final rule (84 FR 37716) establishing regulations that allow us to authorize the nonlethal, incidental, unintentional take of small numbers of northern sea otters (*Enhydra lutris kenyoni*) during year-round oil and gas industry exploration, development, production, and transportation activities in the Cook Inlet of Alaska. The rule established subpart K in part 18 of title 50 of the CFR and is effective through August 1, 2024. The rule prescribed a process under which we issue LOAs to applicants conducting activities as described under the provisions of the regulations.

Each LOA stipulates conditions or methods that are specific to the activity and location. Holders of the LOAs must use methods and conduct activities in a manner that minimizes to the greatest extent practicable adverse impacts on northern sea otters and their habitat, and on the availability of northern sea otters for subsistence purposes. Intentional take and lethal incidental take are prohibited under these regulations.

In accordance with section 101(a)(5)(A) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA; 16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.) and our regulations at 50 CFR part 18, subpart K, in 2019 and 2020 we issued LOAs to each of the following companies in the Cook Inlet of Alaska shown below in table 2.

Table 2—Cook Inlet Letters of Authorization

Year	Company	Activity	Project	LOA #
2019	Hilcorp Alaska, LLC	Exploration	3D seismic surveys in the Cook Inlet	19–CI–01
2019	Hilcorp Alaska, LLC	Production	Routine maintenance activities on platforms and pipelines in the Cook Inlet	19–CI–02
2020	Hilcorp Alaska, LLC	Exploration	Geotechnical surveys in the Lower Cook Inlet	20–CI–01

Authority: We issue this notice under the authority of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.).

Karen Cogswell,
Acting Regional Director, Alaska Region.

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